

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-18

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5/19/73

APPROVED BY AF - MR. NEWSOM

AF/ W: RKSHERWOOD

AF/ RA: ANAVEZ

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 096878

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: UV, MASS, EAID

SUBJECT: UPPER VOLTAN REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

PARIS FOR QUANTON

1. DURING MAY 17 CALL ON ASSTSECY NEWSOM, AMBASSADOR YAGUIBOU CONVEYED REQUEST TO USG FOR ASSISTANCE, WHICH HE TERMED " FORMAL " AND " SECRET ", FROM PRESIDENT LAMIZANA. REQUEST IS FOR A DOD GRANT OF 10,000 MILITARY OUTFITS CONSISTING OF UNIFORMS (5,000 EACH OF COTTON KHAKI AND CAMOUFLAGE), BOOTS, AND UNIFORM CAPS. THE EQUIPMENT WOULD BE FOR ALL OF THE ARMED FORCES AND SOME INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES, WHOSE STRENGTH HE PUT AT 5,000.

2. YAGUIBOU EXPLAINED THE REQUEST BY NOTING THAT THE SIZE OF THE DEFENSE BUDGET WAS A SOURCE OF CONSIDERABLE FRUSTRATION TO THOSE LEADERS WHO WISH TO DEVOTE EVERY AVAILABLE ASSET TO THE COUNTRY' S DEVELOPMENT. HE ADDED
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THAT IT WAS ALSO A SOURCE OF POLITICAL CRITICISM AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT. IF THE GOUV WERE ABLE TO OBTAIN THIS MATERIEL IN STATED QUANTITIES, YAGUIBOU SAID THAT THE BUDGET WOULD BE FREED OF THESE ITEMS FOR FIVE YEARS, THUS PERMITTING THE MONEY TO BE CHanneLED TO DEVELOPMENT MINISTRIES. HE STRESSED THAT THIS WAS NOT A REQUEST FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE; RATHER, ONE FOR INDIRECT BUDGETARY HELP. HE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT UNLIKE MANY OF

ITS NEIGHBORS UPPER VOLTA HAD REFUSED TO PERMIT FRENCH MILITARY FORCES TO REMAIN AND THUS HAD NOT PROFITED FROM ANY SOURCES OF MILITARY SUPPLIES SINCE INDEPENDENCE. HE ALSO CITED POSSIBLE FRENCH OBSTRUCTION AS THE REASON FOR THE GOUV' S DESIRE TO KEEP THE PROPOSAL PRIVATE. NEWSOM INTERJECTED THAT THE US' S BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH ITS AFRICAN FRIENDS REMAIN PRIVATE. IN COMPLETING HIS PRESENTATION, YAGUIBOU SAID THAT AT THE TIME OF HIS CREDENTIALS' PRESENTATION LAST SUMMER, THE SECRETARY REMARKED THAT, AFTER VIETNAM, THE US WOULD HAVE MORE ASSETS TO DEVOTE TO ITS FRIENDS. YAGUIBOU WONDERED WHETHER THIS MIGHT BE THAT MOMENT.

3. NEWSOM POINTED OUT THAT MOST OF US EXCESS MATERIEL BEING LEFT IN VIETNAM. IN ANY CASE, UNDER EXISTING LAW UPPER VOLTA IS ONLY ELIGIBLE FOR MILITARY SALES. SINCE THIS IS CLEARLY NOT WHAT THE VOLTANS HAVE IN MIND, WE WOULD HAVE TO CHECK OTHER POSSIBILITIES. YAGUIBOU EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR OUR EFFORT.

4. EMBASSY' S COMMENTS ON THIS REQUEST WOULD BE WELCOME, INCLUDING WHETHER IT WOULD BE FEASIBLE TO MAKE UNIFORMS IN UPPER VOLTA IF CLOTH PROVIDED. (THIS POSSIBILITY BRIEFLY DISCUSSED BY NEWSOM AND YAGUIBOU.)

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